

Weare Agricultural Committee

Minutes of meeting

March 18, 2008 *draft*

Present: C Bolton, C. Hague, R. Jones, G. Malette, I. McSweeney, D. Trumble.

Meeting called to order by Chairman Bolton at 5:15 PM

Discussion began with appointment of members to the newly approved Weare Agricultural Commission. Members of the Agricultural Committee were polled first to see who had an interest. Initially, Ian McSweeney and Dave Trumble expressed interest in serving as alternates. Chris Hague said she had spoken to Mr. Lariviere, who had attended the public presentation given by the Agricultural Committee last fall. He had expressed an interest in serving, as had Jeff Brown, with whom Chuck Bolton had spoken.

Hague asked whether others at the public presentation knew of vacancies on the Commission. She will send them an email. She also planned to inform Michael Koski, and to ask Merry Rice to put an announcement on the town web site. The deadline for consideration is April 18, 2008, with the Selectmen making appointments April 21st.

Bolton said he intended to pursue a permanent temporary growth ordinance for the Planning Board and therefore was not available for the Commission. He said he would visit Perry Dowst as well as another farmer on Colby Road. Ruth Jones said she would contact Paul Bessey. She also said she would not turn down consideration for service on the Commission. George Malette said he would be a full member, to give continuity from the committee to the Commission.

The group then discussed ways to get information to the public about the Commission. They agreed to post the definition of agriculture on the town website, saying volunteers who farm or have an interest in growing things were needed.

Malette will attend the Cooperative Extension Service meeting on April 21 to speak about forming an Agricultural Commission, since Weare is among the first towns to have done so.

Finally, the committee discussed unfinished business to be passed to the Agricultural Commission, including updates to the soils map begun by Ruth Jones and Melanie Gordon, and easement language for the preservation of agricultural soils. McSweeney noted that the soils map is constantly being updated. Malette said the Conservation Commission will undertake a natural resources inventory of the town this year. This will provide soils information, and a soils map will become a tool for the Conservation Commission. He suggested that as the Agricultural Commission did its work it might share that information, also.

The committee noted goals arrived at during its May 22, 2007 meeting and asked that they be recorded to pass along to the Commission. They are:

1. Recognize the value of locally produced farm products, and supporting activities
2. Tie in with the Master Plan to retain rural character by encouraging farm and forest
3. Recognize that the owners of land need input into the process, and that we need to understand their needs (committee outreach)
4. Preserve productive land when working with developers

Interested volunteers for the Commission should visit or call the Selectmen's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Hague
Secretary

